

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /031 W
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R 300939Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 793

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

COMUSTDC

S E C R E T TAIPEI 0602

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, MARR, MOPS, RP, VS, CH, TW

SUBJECT: ROC VIEWS ON THE ISLANDS CONTROVERSY

REF: A. PEKING 178

? . MANILA 1038

C. TAIPEI 450

1. IN JAN 29 CONVERSATION WITH DCM, HUANG SHAO-KU, SECRETARY GENERAL OF NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL AND IMPORTANT ADVISER TO PREMIER, STRESSED HOPE THAT PARACELS/SPRATLEY SITUATION WOULD SETTLE BACK DOWN THUS REDUCING ROC'S EMBARRASSMENT AND POSSIBLE DANGER TO ROC GARRISONS ON PRATAS AND ITU ABA. HUANG DOWN-PLAYED PRC AGGRESSIVENESS SAYING IT WAS HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT SOUTH VIETNAMESE FORCES HAD LANDED ON PARACELS ISLETS OCCUPIED BY PRC FISHERMEN, THUS PROVOKING PRC RETALIATORY ACTION. AS HAD MOFA VICE MINISTER YANG HSI-KUN EARLIER (REF C), HUANG REFERRED TO BAD MILITARY ADVICE GIVEN PRESIDENT THIEU.

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WM IN INTERNAL PRESS PLAY, ROC HAS REFRAINED FROM HIGHLIGHTING PRC'S BEHAVIOR AS PROVOCATIVE, AGGRESSIVE OR TRUCULENT. TO A DEGREE, THIS IS A FUNCTION OF FACT

THAT IN ROC VIEW, PARACELS (AS SPRATLEYS AND PRATAS, OF COURSE) ARE UNDISPUTABLY CHINESE TERRITORY AND NEITHER VIETNAMESE NOR FILIPINOS HAVE ANY BUSINESS BEING THERE. BUT ROC HAS ALSO AVOIDED USING PARACELS CLASH AS EXAMPLE OF PRC "BLOODTHIRSTINESS" OR "WARLIKE DISPOSITION". WITH SOLE EXCEPTION OF LIEH HO PAO, ROC MEDIA HAVE CAREFULLY DOWNPLAYED PARACELS NEWS, AND LIEN HO PAO WAS GIVEN VERY STIFF REPRIMAND FOR FRONT-PAGING STORY.

3. ROC FEELS ITSELF IN VERY EXPOSED POSITION IN PRATAS AND ESPECIALLY IN SPRATLEYS. THEY DO NOT WANT CONFRONTATION WITH PRC, AND THEY HOPE THAT OTHER PLAYERS WILL REFRAIN FROM PROVOCATION. WHILE WE CANNOT YET CONFIRM IT, WE HAVE HEARD THAT REGULARLY SCHEDULED POST-LUNAR NEW YEAR "COMFORT MISSION" TO PRATAS WAS CANCELLED ON PREMIER'S INSTRUCTIONS. WE HAVE ALSO HAD VAGUE HINTS FROM SOME SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS THAT ROC IS CONSIDERING EVACUATION OF SPRATLEY GARRISON, AND ARE SEEKING CONFIRMATION.
MCCONAUGHY

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